

MCM  
*Supertest*

# Kawasaki Z650D SR

## Z650 with an American accent

IT WAS only a year or so ago that the Japanese manufacturers intimated that they were building different models for Europe and the States. Everyone — in Europe at least — heaved a sigh of relief. No longer would we be getting the surplus bikes that couldn't be sold in the States. Perhaps we'd also be spared the legal idiosyncracies that went with them. And more to the point it seemed that the manufacturers had discovered important things about Europe, like, it rains here, it gets dark every night and the roads have bends and bumps in them.

Bikes actually improved by leaps and bounds, instead of travelling in leaps and bounds. Kawasaki, in particular, discovered that there were headlamp bulbs rated in excess of 35 watts. Brakes worked in the wet — and Kawasaki made an important contribution here, as well.

Now, quite suddenly, they are making bikes for the UK which are built to look like what we expect an American machine to look like. It's not just Kawasaki, they're all doing it and some of 1980's bikes look even worse. Kawasaki are getting the mentions

because the 650SR is the bike we've just tested. It's only fair to say that the SR is an addition to their range and doesn't replace the 650C.

And styling is styling; different lines and colours appeal to different people. But front forks and tyres are structural items which control the performance of the bike and are not part of the decorative trim. The stylists

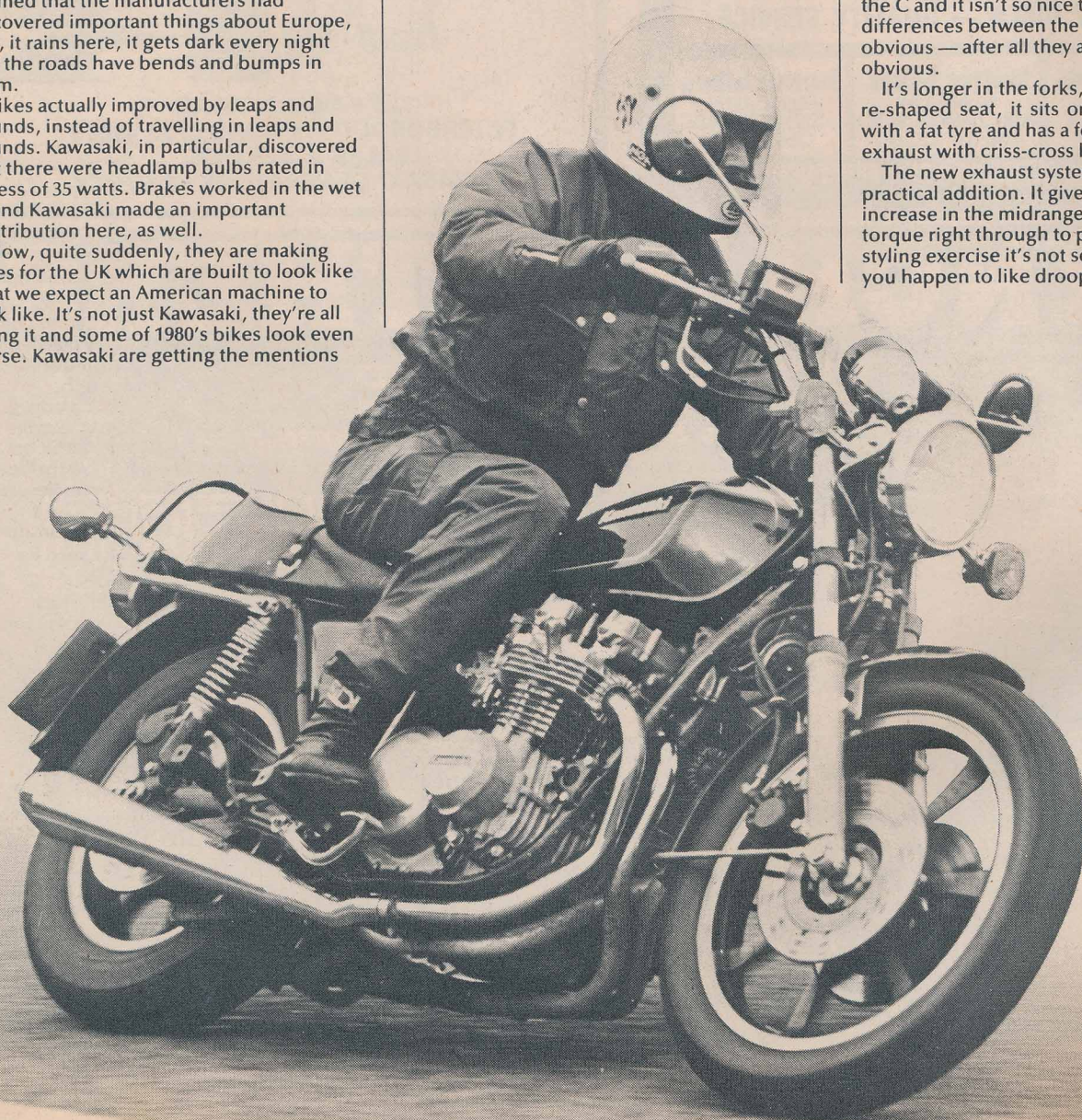
should be let loose on the machine *after* the engineers have made it work properly — not the other way around.

Having said all that, the SR wasn't as bad as we'd expected it to be. The firm suspension and taut steering of the C model have given way to sloppier springing and a sit-up riding position and that's about the only real difference.

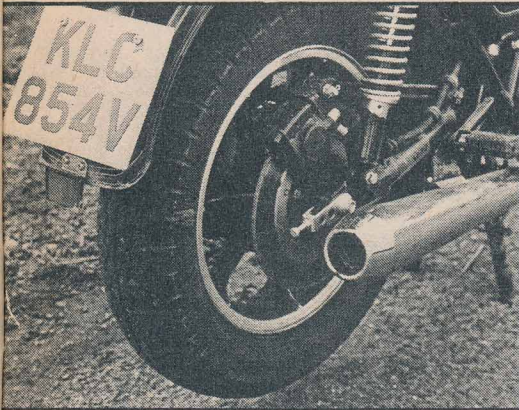
The changes are cosmetic, they are there purely for styling, but they do affect the structure of the bike. The SR isn't as good as the C and it isn't so nice to ride. The differences between the C and the SR are obvious — after all they are meant to be obvious.

It's longer in the forks, has high bars and a re-shaped seat, it sits on a 16in wheel with a fat tyre and has a four-into-two exhaust with criss-cross header pipes.

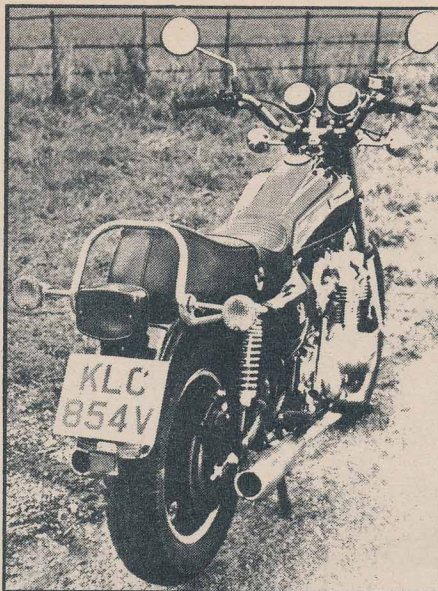
The new exhaust system is quite a practical addition. It gives a sizeable increase in the midrange power, with more torque right through to peak revs. As a styling exercise it's not so clever — unless you happen to like droopy silencers. And



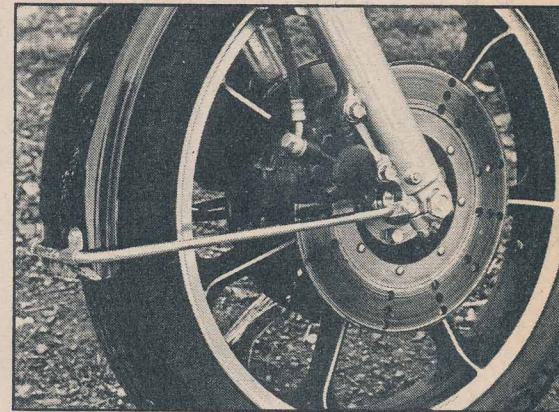




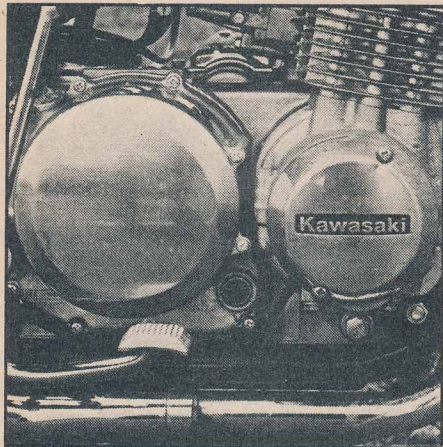
The 5½ inch tyre is carried on a 16 inch rim, which makes it look even fatter.



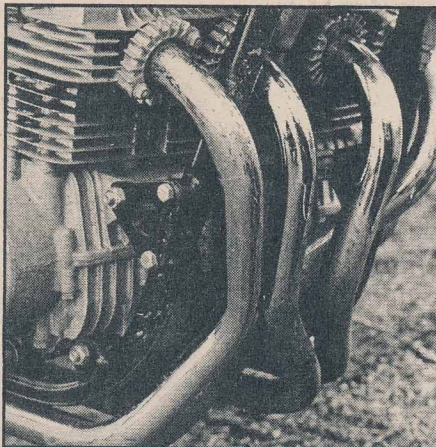
Rear view shows off the new styling but the effect is watered down by compromises.



The SR has longer front forks although the brakes and running gear are stock 650.



Spy glass on the engine case makes checking the oil level a doddle.



The new exhaust gives quite a boost to the mid-range power.

the low-slung cans keep the centre stand low so it drags on the road every time the 650 sees a left-hander.

It's the riding position that makes the biggest difference. The seat is shaped as if they were thinking of making it a two-tier affair. The bars go up and back towards the rider and try to give the laid-back feel to the SR. But, like all styling exercises at factory level, the design is watered down. For it to work (both visually and physically) it needs to be more extreme. That would call for a new frame, to lower the seat and possibly to lower the whole bike, repositioned foot controls and so on.

Whether or not you like the chopped-down look is not the point. Some people do, others don't; but who's going to fall for a half-hearted compromise which is neither one thing nor the other?

The result is a very upright riding position which discourages cruising above 60mph because of the increasing stress on the rider's arms. The only real trans-Atlantic flavour you get is a taste of their 55mph speed limit.

That suits the suspension, which is soggy rather than soft, because it gives quite a smooth ride at low speeds. With a bit of

bounciness in the rear dampers, the SR didn't need much encouragement to start a mild weave, the favourite place being in long, constant-speed bends.

While the steering and handling weren't too bad, the SR didn't have the fast response of the 650C, perhaps because it just isn't big enough for its tyres. The 3.50 front tyre is just one size up on the other 650s and may even be an improvement. However it is matched (or otherwise) with a 130/90 profile at the rear. That's nearly 5½in of tyre and it looks even fatter because it's wrapped around a small, 16in wheel.

None of the Z650s have been short on performance and one of their characteristics has been the long, even spread of power which makes them very flexible. The SR is no exception and, with more torque it is, if anything, still more tractable.

It will pull top gear from nothing upwards, barely needs the clutch and gearbox, and the engine is quite happy to dawdle along, fitting in well with what we assume to be the lazy-rider image of the SR.

If the general set-up of the bike doesn't encourage performance riding, that doesn't mean the performance isn't there. It gives the same peak power as the 650C but does it

about 1000rpm lower down the rev scale. Translated into speed, it means the 650 can hit 108mph with the rider normally seated. It also reached 115mph with the rider as flat as the riding position allowed.

The ease with which the power comes in was demonstrated during the standing quarter tests when the SR rattled off several passes in the low 13s. It was also getting close to 100mph at the fast end of the strip which shows that the SR isn't as cumbersome as it looks.

Brakes are standard Kawasaki issue — effective, controllable and reliable in the wet. There were no real faults with the SR's handling — apart from minor weaving — but it's not as good as the 650C and suffers from poor cornering clearance.

Fuel consumption is one aspect which wasn't very bright. The SR rarely reached 50mpg even when cruising around at 50mph and the best figure we got was only 51.3mpg. Running the 3 gallon tank dry gave a range of less than 150 miles but to avoid this undesirable state of affairs the SR has a warning light to let the rider know that fuel is getting low. It also has a reserve. Reserve tank is good for 11 miles — which isn't worth having. And the light comes on after about 105 miles. I fail to see the need for both.

The rest of the SR is pretty well stock Kawasaki; it does its job and there were no problems or faults.

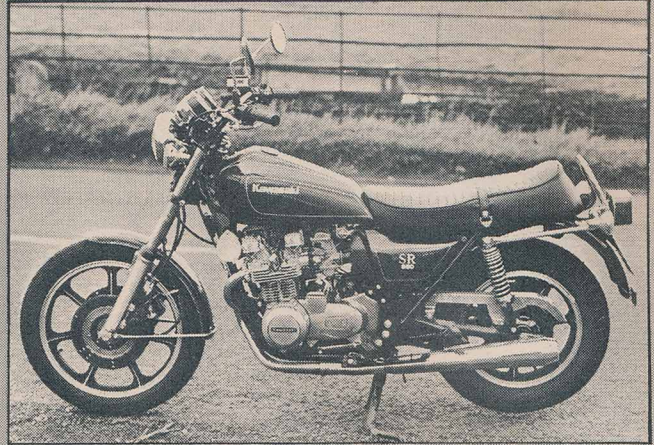
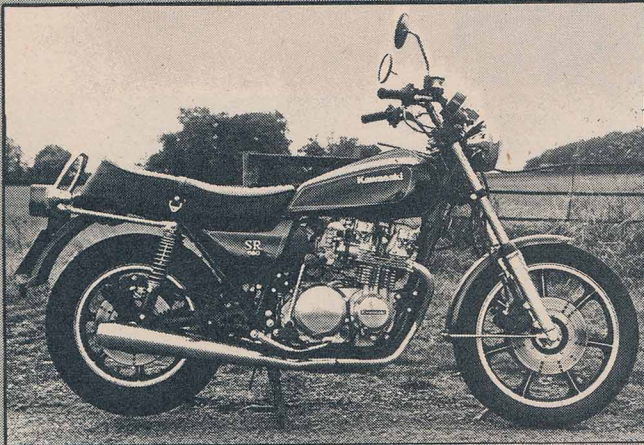
For what the SR offers — i.e. making a good bike slightly worse — it is hardly worth the extra cost. The price is £50 more than the C model and £200 more than the basic 650B. The only improvement on the machine is the exhaust which does give more torque and more power.

At 5000rpm the SR gives slightly more power than the C. At 6000 it is giving 5bhp more; at 7000 it has an extra 8bhp and at 8000 is 2hp up, the motor peaking much earlier than the C model. This is not only a good increase, it also happens in the speed range where it is most useful to a road rider.

By John Robinson



# Kawasaki Z650D SR



## Engine and electrical system

type..... DOHC in-line four  
 displacement..... 652 cc  
 bore x stroke..... 62 x 54 mm  
 compression ratio..... 9.5:1  
 carburettor..... four 24 mm Mikuni VM 24SS  
 ignition system..... contact breaker and coil  
 lubrication..... wet sump  
 generator..... 12V, 190W at 4000 rpm  
 battery..... 12v, 10 A-h  
 headlamp..... 45/40W  
 claimed output..... 62 hp at 8000  
 claimed torque..... 41.2 ft-lb at 7000

## Chassis

front forks..... 5.5 inch stroke  
 rear suspension..... 5 preload positions, 3.2 inch stroke  
 front tyre..... 3.50H19  
 rear tyre..... 130/90 x 16  
 wheelbase..... 56.5 inch  
 castor/trail..... 62.5 deg/4.5 inch  
 overall length..... 86.2 inch  
 overall width..... 32.9 inch  
 dry weight..... 487 lb  
 fuel tank..... 3.1 gallon

## Transmission

HyVo primary chain to clutch and five-speed gearbox, final drive by chain.  
 primary reduction..... 2.55

final reduction..... 2.5 (40/16)  
 gearbox ratios..... 2.33; 1.63, 1.27; 1.04 and 0.89

## Performance

maximum speed (obtained at MIRA in neutral conditions)..... 115 mph  
 standing start ¼-mile..... 13.3 sec/98.3 mph  
 speed in gears at 9000 rpm redline  
 1st..... 46 mph  
 2nd..... 69 mph  
 3rd..... 84 mph  
 4th..... 102 mph  
 5th..... 119 mph

## Fuel consumption

best..... 51.3 mpg  
 worst..... 42.2 mpg  
 average..... 46.3 mpg

## Parts prices inc VAT

handlebar..... £9.12  
 front mudguard..... £19.27  
 one piston and ring set..... £13.47  
 cb points..... £8.10  
 complete exhaust system..... £138.70  
 list price, inc VAT..... £1649  
 warranty: 12 months unlimited mileage

## Importer

Kawasaki UK, Deal Avenue, Trading Estate, Slough.

rpm	bhp	torque lb-ft
3000	18	32
3500	22	32
4000	24	32
4500	27	32
5000	31	33
5500	38	35
6000	41	36
6500	46	37.5
7000	50	37.5
7500	52	36.5
8000	52	34
8500	51	32
8800	50	30

power at rear wheel/effective torque at crankshaft measured on Heenan Froude DPX3 at LEDAR, 10, School Lane, Baston, Lincs.

